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JUDGES: AN APOLOGIA FOR DAVIDIC KINGSHIP? AN INDUCTIVE APPROACH

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Introduction

Beyond its selective presentation of Israel's pre-monarchical history,[1] what is the purpose of the book of Judges? Most commentators opt for a combination of two obvious themes found within the book:[2] (1) covenant infidelity, that is, the "Canaanization of Israel,"[3] which brings the threat of the loss of the land; and (2) a treatise written in support of the monarchy.[4] But do these general themes truly present the full picture and

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1. I use the term "history" not in the modern technical sense but as representative of how this material was understood as such by its original audience. I am aware of the complex issues surrounding the use of this term in relation to ancient texts especially as defined by scholars like Van Seters (see *In Search of History*).

2. For a list of scholars who hold these positions, see Boda, *Judges*, 1056.

3. E.g., Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 58, 71, 73; Wong, *Compositional Strategy*; however, see comments by Boda, *Judges*, 1056–58.

4. Apart from Brettler's and Amit's arguments (see below), several perspectives regarding the author's push for the monarchy have been posited for Judges. Sweeney, "Davidic Polemics," 517–29, suggests that the polemic is centered more against Ephraim and Bethel and their responsibility in the "Canaanization" of Israel, which, in turn, aided the Davidic and Judahite position. On the other hand, Schneider, *Judges*, xiii, lists the pro-Davidic/anti-Saulide polemic as an underlying theme of the book. While Sweeney's position fits best as a sub-theme, Schneider's assertion appears closer to the main theme. See also the work of O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, which will be referenced throughout.

motive of the author?[5] In 1970, A. E. Cundall developed the latter of these two themes in an article that promoted Judges as an apology for the monarchy, which he suggested was written in the late Davidic or early Solomonic period.[6] Now, while Cundall is certainly not alone in his evaluation of Judges as a treatise for the monarchy (see n. 4 above), is his proposed dating for Judges accurate? In this article, I will contend that the book of Judges reveals a much more focused *Sitz im Leben*, one that betrays a push for David's right to the throne once held by Saul. Using an inductive approach, I will demonstrate this based upon four central features of the book: (1) the tendency of the author to elevate the tribe of Judah; (2) the numerous character parallels between Saul, Ishbosheth, David, and the judges; (3) the anti-Saulide polemic of chapters 19–21;[7] and (4) the chronological

5. I use "author" as the representative of the compiler of the material. It is likely that the author used sources, whether one agrees they are "history" or "legend" is not the purpose of this article. My focus will be upon the author's intent in compiling the material as we now find it. I tend to agree with Cundall's conclusion that the general ordering of the material in Judges is original (see Cundall, "Judges," 178).

6. This article builds upon aspects of Cundall's article, "Judges."

7. Brettler, "Book of Judges," 395–418, esp. 414–15, presents evidence of pro-Saulide sentiment throughout a long period of Israel's history. He notes the long Saulide genealogies of 1 Chr 8:33–40, extending twelve generations beyond Saul (8:35 mentions one son as bearing the name *Melech* "king"); Mordecai's genealogy goes back to Kish (Esth 2:5); and rabbinic literature betrays pro-Saulide sentiment (*b. Yoma* 22b; *Midrash Shmuel*). He concludes that Judg 19–21 are a polemic against Saulide kingship. While I agree with Brettler's assertion concerning the anti-Saulide stance in these chapters (although I hope to prove that it applies to the entire book), I cannot agree with his conclusion that the author compiled the book sometime after the divided monarchy (p. 417). Further, the conclusion of Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 184–88, that chapters 19–21 were added after the fall of Jerusalem and Zedekiah's exile as a "hidden polemic" to fight a rising hope in the region of Benjamin for a return to a Saulide ruler does not seem probable. Was the "hiddenness" of the polemic for the purpose of not arousing Babylonian suspicions? She does not make this clear. Even if there was a remnant left in the region of Benjamin, their ability to have a "ruler," let alone a king, would have been unlikely. Thus, contrary to Brettler's and Amit's assertions, there is only one logical period for the writing of such a polemic, that is, between David's rise to power in Hebron and the end of the civil war noted in 2 Sam 2–4. Of course this challenges the

notations within the book linking Judges to the time of David. I will conclude that Judges is a masterful pro-Davidic apologia/anti-Saulide polemic[8] written soon after Saul's death during the civil war recorded in 2 Sam 2–4.[9] Using an intricate rhetorical argument, the author wrote a "first edition"[10] of Judges as a means for convincing the northern tribes that David was the right choice for king, and not Saul's son Ishbosheth.[11] At the same time, Judges was not only a polemic against Saulide rule but also a means for bringing solidarity to the twelve tribes that were fractured as a result of the ongoing war and for encouraging proper YHWH worship.[12] In this regard, the author desired to elicit from the reader one response—Davidic kingship is the only answer to the dilemma facing the nation.

Part 1: The Centrality of Judah in Judges

From the outset, the rhetorical intentions presented by the compiler of Judges are evident to the reader. Structurally, one can readily see this in the strategic placement of the tribe of

scholarly status quo on the dating of this portion of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH).

8. Contra Exum, "The Center Cannot Hold," 411, who posits that there is an increasing "dissolution of coherence" in Judges. On the "royal polemic in Judges," see the excursus in Boda, *Judges*, 1077–81.

9. See also the comments in Boda, *Judges*, 1048. The dating of the sources of Judges is hotly debated, with some even suggesting that there were no sources, since the entire work is an exilic fabrication; see Guest, "Can Judges Survive without Sources?" 43–61. However, Warner's position (see "The Dating of the Period of the Judges," 463) seems more tenable when he notes that the period of the judges described in the text may have started as early as 1375 BCE. Beecher, "Literary Form," 28, also suggests an early date for the writing and editing of Judges but gives a span that includes Samuel, David, Gad, and Nathan. O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 307, stops short of dating the book of Judges but instead uses the term "ostensible" for the situation that fits best the period of the writing of the book (viz., 2 Sam 1–4).

10. Cundall, "Judges," 178, uses this terminology to describe his perspective of the early form of Judges.

11. See also the work of Peterson, "Abiathar, the Priest," 432–52; and Peterson, *Authors*, chapter 7.

12. See Boda, *Judges*, 1057–58.

Judah in both the opening and closing chapters of the book. In this vein, the double introduction has obvious rhetorical import. The placement of 1:1—2:5 before 2:6–10,[13] the latter of which tells of the state of Israel *before* the death of Joshua, and which duplicates parts of the end of Josh 24, appears to be purposeful as well. The author obviously desired to remove the focus from Joshua and place it on the tribe of Judah.[14] While the author in no way belittles the role played by Joshua and the elders of his generation, he does, nonetheless, override chronological concerns for the immediate purpose at hand (cf. 1:1 and 2:6).[15] Further, his disregard for chronology appears again in chapters 17–21, where we return to a period consonant with the opening chapters of Judges,[16] that is, not a period contemporaneous with the time of Samson, whose judgeship many commentators place just before the judgeships of Eli and Samuel.[17] In this final

13. The scholarly theories that deal with these chapters are numerous. For example, Brettler, *Book of Judges*, 92–102, devotes an entire chapter to the discussion, suggesting that chapter 1 originally was a conclusion or appendix to Joshua, a theory also proposed by Fohrer, *Introduction*, 197. On the other hand, Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 9, 42, proposed that Josh 24—Judg 2:5 were a post-Dtr addition, a similar conclusion reached by Weinfeld, "Judges 1:1—2:5," 388–400, who proposes that it functioned as a later addition, presenting Judah as the true leader of the conquest. Also, Mullen, "Judges 1:1–36," 33–64, argues that 1:1—2:5 has been inserted as an introduction to Judges after the former Deuteronomic introduction in 2:6–3:6. He goes on to argue for a date during the exile when Jehoiachin was released from prison (2 Kgs 25:27–37) in ca. 561 BCE. Younger, "Judges 1," 214–16, draws parallels with Assyrian texts and argues for a geographic south to north movement in the text. For an in-depth analysis of the textual issues of chapter 1, see Auld, "Judges 1 and History," 261–85.

14. Kaufmann, *Conquest of Palestine*, 82–86, defends the antiquity of the opening material in Judges suggesting that it should be dated to a period shortly after Joshua when the tribes continued the wars with the Canaanites.

15. So too Boda, *Judges*, 1051. For a discussion on a possible chronology for Judges, see Beecher, "Literary Form," 3–28. See also Weinfeld, "Period of the Conquest," 93–113, for an analysis of the Dtr redaction of the Judges source material.

16. See Boda, *Judges*, 1051.

17. Beecher, "Literary Form," 6 n. 1, argues that the story of Samson should be linked with the second Philistine invasion of Israel under Shamgar as opposed to the fourth under Eli.

block, the reader is not only reintroduced to the tribe of Judah itself (20:18), but also to two Levites, one from Judah (17:7–13; 19:1–2), and the second one who is married to a concubine from Judah. In both cases, these Levites are in some way oppressed by northern tribes (see chapters 18 and 19, Dan and Benjamin, respectively).[18] Interestingly, the Levite in the first account is from Bethlehem (17:7), the hometown of David, as is the concubine of the second Levite (19:1–2). Both Judah and the Levites (17:7—20:7) play a vital role in the narrative. Thus, the positioning of Judah at the beginning of the book is equally matched by the decisive role the tribe, and those associated with it, play in the closing chapters.[19] This bookending causes the reader to focus on the function of Judah's leadership and the role Judah played in securing Israel's unity.[20]

Textually, the focus on Judah begins in the first two verses of the book. Here it is made clear that the leader is not an individual but rather a tribe—Judah. The text in Judg 1:1–2 forms an *inclusio* of sorts with 20:18. Beginning with 1:1–2, these three verses read,

ויהי אחרי מות יהושע וישאלו בני ישראל ביהוה לאמר מי יעלה־לנו
אל־הכנעני בתחלה להלחם בו ויאמר יהוה יהודה הנה נתתי את־הארץ בידו

18. So too Boda, *Judges*, 1080.

19. So too Brettler, "Book of Judges," 399. Brettler points out correctly that the appearance of the *inclusio* makes it clear that the text of Judges was at least edited this way as a means of delimiting the book and should not be seen as including other material in either Joshua or 1 Samuel. For a discussion on the latter, see Webb, *Book of Judges*, 19.

20. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 57–59, esp. 57 n. 156, intimates an anti-Judah polemic in Judges based upon three passages: 1:5–7; 5:2–31; and 15:9–13. However, these are not enough to remove the overt call for Davidic leadership prevalent throughout the book. For example, Judah's willingness to give Samson to the Philistines in 15:9–13 shows the need for kingship. The inhabitants of Judah, the tribe geographically closest to the Philistines, are worried about their very existence—this is the reason they gave up Samson. Of no surprise is a similar action by the inhabitants of Judah against David when Saul was on a murderous rampage (1 Sam 23). This, however, did not diminish Judah's central role in bringing David to the throne—twice (cf. 2 Sam 2:4; 19:14–43). For more on this, see Peterson, "Abiathar, the Priest," 444 n. 50.

> "And it came to pass after the death of Joshua that the children of Israel enquired of YHWH saying 'Who will go up for us first against the Canaanites to wage war against them?' And YHWH said, 'Judah, behold I have given the land into his hand.'"

> ויקמו ויעלו בית־אל וישׁאלו באלהים ויאמרו בני ישׂראל מי יעלה־לנו בתחלה למלחמה עם־בני בנימן ויאמר יהוה יהודה בתחלה

> "And the children of Israel went up to Bethel and they enquired of God and they said, 'Who will go up for us first to wage war with the sons of Benjamin?' And YHWH said, 'Judah shall go up first.'"

It is clear that the author desires to place special emphasis on Judah by his use of similar language in both of these verses. This again points to the unity and intentionality of the book and the continuity of authorship. The appearance of the verbs שׁאל ("to enquire") and לחם ("to wage war"), along with the syntactical constructs מי יעלה־לנו ("who will go up for us") and ויאמר יהוה ("And YHWH said"), and the noun בתחלה ("at the beginning" or "first") bolster this conclusion. Not surprisingly, as a part of the downward spiral of Israel and the Canaanization process, the ones being fought against change from the Canaanites in 1:2 to the sons of Benjamin in 20:18. Israel has turned on themselves as opposed to their true enemy, the Canaanites. Of course, this serves as a fitting parallel to the situation depicted in 2 Sam 2–4. Israel had turned upon itself in a civil war while their enemy (i.e., the Philistines) looked on, waiting to claim the spoils. Moreover, the use of אלהים ("God") as opposed to יהוה (YHWH) as the direct object of the verb שׁאל may again reveal the author's secondary cultic rhetorical agenda. At the beginning of the book, Israel enquires of YHWH, but at the end, they enquire of the gods (a possible understanding of the plural אלהים).[21] By this point in the book, the author takes a rhetorical jab at Israel for enquiring of the gods not YHWH; however, YHWH is the one who answers in both cases!

In 1:3–11, Judah is seen setting the example of how to take possession of the land; Judah works together with his "brother"

21. I am grateful to Rickie Moore for pointing this out.

in order to gain success.[22] The first slight against Benjamin appears in vv. 8 and 21. In v. 8, Judah conquers Jerusalem, whereas in v. 21, the author points out that Benjamin was unable to complete the same feat of subduing the city.[23] Who did or did not conquer this city is debated.[24] However, what is important for the author is that Judah succeeded where Benjamin had failed. In the same vein, the mentioning of the conquering of Hebron in v. 10 immediately brings to mind David's capital city during his early monarchy and the period of the civil war (2 Sam 2:1–11). This conclusion is reinforced by the highlighting of Hebron again in the next section. What is more, it is Caleb,[25] a

22. Contrary to those who suggest that this shows Judah's weakness, a unified front against the Canaanites was always the plan of God (Josh 1:12–18; 8:1). Also, Schneider, *Judges*, 6, 279–80, has posited that the account at Bezek in 1:4–7 was placed there to alert the reader to the Saul/David polemic, since Bezek was the staging ground for Saul's action on behalf of Jabesh-Gilead (see 1 Sam 11:7–11). See also, Weinfeld, "Judges 1:1–2:5," 390.

23. Commentators point out the problems with this verse in light of Josh 15:63. Whether this is a scribal error of a later date or whether this notation of victory was a part of a source available to the author is uncertain. Some suggest that Josh 15:63 is the original and that the author transposed Benjamin for Judah in order to deprecate Saul's tribe.

24. Because Jerusalem borders both Benjamin and Judah, there is the possibility that Jerusalem exchanged hands several times during the judges' period. Also, Wolf, *Judges*, 386–87, notes that the "conquering" of the city may not have included its central "stronghold" (מצדה), which would have allowed for the Jebusites to recapture Jerusalem later. He offers the example of Abimelech's twofold conquering of Shechem in 9:45, 49 as evidence for this interpretation. Younger, "Judges 1," 227, bolsters this position when he uses Assyrian exemplars to show that initial victory and subjugation are two different things that can span a period of time without necessarily being in conflict. Finally, it may be best to see Jerusalem as a two-part city on the eastern and western hills (see Hubbard, "Topography," 130–54, esp. 135–37 and the diagram on 136). This is supported by the use of the dual in the Hebrew word for Jerusalem. On the two-hill theory, see Peterson "Conquest of Jerusalem," 13–17.

25. Scholars debate the connection of Caleb (the Kenizzite) to Judah. Many scholars (e.g., Brettler, "Book of Judges," 405) note that he was not from the tribe of Judah but was only later associated with them (Gen 15:19; 36:11). By the time of the writing of Joshua (14:6, 14), Caleb was placed in a leadership role of the tribe with full possession rights (Josh 15:13; cf. Num

leader in the tribe of Judah (cf. Num 13:6) and the last of the notable leaders of the wilderness generation, who is mentioned next. Even though this story is duplicated in Josh 15:13–19,[26] it still plays an important rhetorical function here in Judg 1; Caleb, from Judah, leads the way in conquering Canaan, namely, Hebron![27]

Next, v. 18 lists three Philistine cities that are defeated at the hands of Judah (Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron). These cities are part of the region that David later subdues (2 Sam 5:17–25; 8:1–12).[28] Judah's only failure in chapter 1 is mitigated by the notation that those living in the lowland had iron chariots (v. 19). Nevertheless, the opportunity to bring to remembrance the former glory of Judah against the region inhabited by the Philistines served to bring clarity for those vying for the throne after Saul's death—the Philistines are Israel's enemy, not David!

Chapter 1 ends with the rundown of the conquest failures of many of the other tribes such as Manasseh, Ephraim, Dan, Ashur, Zebulun, and Naphtali.[29] Here in the closing verses, individual tribes are mentioned as trying to conquer the land on their own. According to the earlier accounts of chapter 1, the

32:12). See Hasel, "Caleb," 573–74. Beecher, "Literary Form," 28, points out the possible play on the word כלב ("Caleb") in Abner's statement הראש כלב אנכי אשר ליהודה ("Am I a dog's head, belonging to Judah") in response to Ishbosheth's accusation (2 Sam 3:8). It could be rendered, "Am I a Caleb's head, belonging to Judah?" Beecher notes the possibility of the slander intended against David's association with the non-Israelite group. However, for David, the support of the Kenizzites was vital.

26. Most scholars agree that Judg 1:10–15 and 20 came from Josh 15:13–19 or a similar source. Schneider, *Judges*, 283, notes that the parallel between Caleb's oath (1:12), which secured a wife for Othniel, and the bad oath against giving wives to Benjamin (21:1, 7), was intentional.

27. So too Boda, *Judges*, 1077.

28. The LXX rendering of Judg 1:18 records that Judah did *not* take these cities at this time. Perhaps the mention of Judah's inability to take control of the valley region (1:19b) suggests that the LXX is correct (see Josh 11:22). Others posit a temporary control of these cities, which is being exploited here by the author.

29. Reuben, Gad, and Issachar are not mentioned. This may be due to the fact that Reuben and Gad had possessions on the eastern side of the Jordan. The lack of the mention of Issachar is not clear especially in light of 5:15.

author makes it clear that it was only the combined forces of Judah and Simeon, with the help of YHWH, that has brought relative success in conquering the land. Simeon had been blessed by joining forces with Judah. Again the author seeks to point out the importance of a unified front against their enemies in order to bring success (cf. Josh 1:12–18; 7:3–4; 8:1). However, Judah is to be the leader. Finally, 1:22–26 briefly mentions the blessing of the Lord on the house of the great patriarch Joseph. Here the author offers some conciliatory remarks about the northern tribes in an effort at wooing them to the Davidic rule.[30] Joseph was by far the greatest of all the sons of Jacob who settled in northern Canaan and east of the Jordan. Mention of him would have boded well with the North, as would the more positive material concerning the judges from northern tribes. [31]

After the pro-Judah introduction, the author once again pivots to his cultic bias and sends a stern warning to Israel through the angel of the Lord at Bochim (2:1–5). After doing so, the author returns to the chronological sequence left off in Josh 24 by repeating, almost verbatim, Josh 24:28–31 in 2:6–10. Although this is often labeled a "double introduction," it could also have served as an introduction to the cyclical section of Judges. Indeed, Israel's failure to adhere to God's covenantal commands (2:20) after the death of Joshua and his generation led to a recurring cycle expounded in 2:11–19. Here we also find the

30. The use of the phrase יהוה עמם ("the Lord was with them"; i.e., Judah and the northern tribes) appears only in vv. 19 and 22 in Judges. Even though Judah is the leader, the author desires to show his readers that YHWH was with *both* Judah and the northern Israelite tribes. If the purpose of the book is to promote Davidic rule, then wooing the other tribes with some positive commentary seems appropriate.

31. Contra Brettler, *Book of Judges*, 99–102, whose conclusion, that all the material in Judges is against the northern tribes, does not hold up under close scrutiny. Judges is replete with positive references to the northern tribes, which suggests an underlying conciliatory note to the presentation. At the same time, Mullen, "Judges 1:1–36," 53, is correct when he notes that, according to the text, Judah is selected by YHWH (1:2); they faithfully instituted the *ḥerem* (1:17) and followed the dictates of Moses (1:20). However, the other tribes did not follow the law fully (Deut 20:11) by leaving the Canaanites in the land and forcing them to the *corvée* (1:27–35).

reason for the enduring presence of Canaanites within the borders of Israel (2:20—3:6): Israel and the judges had failed miserably and thus were being tested by YHWH.

This conclusion is bolstered in the cyclical section of Judges (i.e., 3:7—16:31) where the author focuses on the inability of the judges (whether good or bad) to thwart the incessant degeneration of the nation. This degenerative cycle is marked by the recurring phrase, ויעשׂו בני־ישׂראל את־הרע בעיני יהוה ("and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord"; cf. 2:11; 3:7; 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1).[32] According to the author, this cycle could only be remedied by strong, God-focused leadership. By the end of the apologia, the reader is intended to come to this understanding with little doubt, from which tribe the king is to come. Nevertheless, until chapter 19, this latter aspect of the author's apologetic relies heavily on an implicit argument based upon character parallels.[33]

Part 2: The Character Parallels within the Cycle

A cursory reading of the accounts of the judges in chapters 3–16 reveals that long-term safety and peace required more than temporary judges—a strong, God-fearing monarchy was needed.[34] At the same time, the author's choice of which judges to describe, how much material to relate, and which aspects of their lives to include appears arbitrary at times. While it is

32. I am fully aware that this phrase is most often assigned to Dtr. While space does not permit a full discussion here, it is important to note that it is not clear at what point these formulae may or may not have been added. Further, even without the attached formula, the message of a constant downward spiral is implicit in the material and does not affect my argument. For a breakdown of the commonly held perspective on the Deuteronomistic portions of Judges, see Globe, "Enemies Round About," 234–36. On the other hand, Guest, "Can Judges Survive without Sources?" 56–60, posits that the original author may have included these formulae. He sees the work as being so coherent that it had to be from a single hand. While Guest dates the entire work of Judges to a much later period, his assumption concerning the unity of the text also holds true for an early date.

33. So too O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 268.

34. So too Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 445.

possible that the author may have drawn upon an earlier list of judges and their stories, the author perhaps had a literary approach far more complex than a mere retelling of historical and legendary material. Could it be that the author carefully chose particular judges and events from their lives in order to parallel characteristics of these former leaders to contemporary ones of the author's day? It is my contention that this is in fact the methodology adopted by the author of Judges when he chose to elaborate the events of certain judges while downplaying others.[35]

Up until the time when Israel committed idolatry through the worship of Gideon's ephod, the judges generally are presented positively.[36] However, after the account of Gideon, the negative traits start to outweigh the positive ones. Nevertheless, there is a good reason for this. As will be shown by the charts below, the positive and negative characteristics of particular judges take on new meaning when paralleled with leaders contemporary to the period the author is drawing attention to, namely, the reign of Saul, and, more specifically, the seven-year civil war of 2 Sam 2–4. The positive qualities of a given judge tend to resemble qualities found in David, whereas the negative aspects of the same judge most often find parallels in the character flaws of Saul (and Ishbosheth), especially after his failures chronicled in 1 Sam 13–15. This approach would allow the author to present "history," while making a plea for Davidic kingship. In what follows, I will note points of contact that highlight the author's pro-Davidic apologia and anti-Saulide polemic.

35. Schneider, *Judges*, xiv, has noted in her introduction that the "implicit evaluation of Saul and David is also included in Judges through the many qualities, often negative, of the various judges." This is also noted by O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 281–96, 309. Upon completion of my own inductive analysis, I discovered that O'Connell makes many of the same character parallels that I note; however, I differ on several points, especially with reference to Samson. See also the work of Dragga, "In the Shadow of the Judges," 39–46.

36. So too Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 443–54, esp. 444–45.

Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar: Judg 3:7–31

The author's choice to begin the list of judges with the Judahite judge, Othniel, whom many see as the ideal judge,[37] should not at all be surprising in light of the message he desired to present.[38] Othniel had accepted a challenge by Caleb to capture Debir in order to procure Achsah as a wife (1:12–13). Similarly, David accepted the military challenge of Saul, twice, in order to win a daughter of Saul as a wife—once for Merab when he defeated Goliath and later fought the Philistines (1 Sam 17:25–27; 18:17–19), and once for Michal when he delivered 200 foreskins of the Philistines—twice the bride price (1 Sam 18:20–27)! In telling the two accounts of Othniel in chapters 1 and 3, the author brings to the reader's recollection how Saul misused David twice. Moreover, Saul's mistreatment of David, especially with Merab, highlights the reality that Saul was a man who could not keep his word.[39]

Next, the great exploits of judges like Ehud and Shamgar evoke memories of the great military leader Israel had in David, whose exploits were known nationwide (1 Sam 18:5–6; 2 Sam 5:1–3), the same exploits that had started the rift between David and Saul (1 Sam 18:1–8).[40] The account of Ehud in many ways

37. Brettler, "Book of Judges," 404–5; and Brettler, *Book of Judges*, 111, posits an allegorical reading for the Othniel account where Cushan-rishathaim is not a real person but a concept, as the name suggests "the dark double-wicked one." Thus, Othniel (i.e., Judah) defeats wickedness in Israel. He also suggests that 2:11—16:31 are to be seen as an allegorical polemic of Judah's supremacy in leadership over northern judgeship/kingship (404–8). See the negative critique of Brettler's assumptions by Block, "Deborah among the Judges," 231.

38. Globe, "Enemies Round About," 240–41, has pointed out that the geographical movement of the narrative is from south to north (i.e., from Judah to Dan). In this movement, the actions of the judges become increasingly questionable in light of the benchmark established by Othniel followed by Ehud, Shamgar, and Deborah (242).

39. On the issue of David's reaction to Saul's duplicity regarding the giving of Michal and Merab as wives, see Peterson, "Gibeonite Revenge," 201–22.

40. The use of historical material by the author served to unite the tribes around David. Tribal pride was elicited by these shorter accounts, which could be called upon to show the author's concern for reconciliation after a hoped-for

parallels David's first mighty act as a warrior—David's slaying of Goliath (1 Sam 17).[41] Ehud's brave act in killing the king of Moab in the midst of his own palace (3:12–30) finds affinity with David's brave act of killing Goliath in the presence of the Philistines (1 Sam 17:40–51). What is more, Ehud had fashioned his own weapon (3:16), as no doubt David had his shepherd's sling. Moreover, both had killed the "large"[42] leader of the enemy under abnormal circumstances to start a rout of the enemy and bring about a great victory for the nation (cf. Judg 3:27–30; 1 Sam 17:51–52). Again, there is a subtle jab at the Benjamite Saul, who should have been the "Ehud" figure in 1 Sam 17, not the boy David.

Finally, the purpose of the brief notation about Shamgar (3:31) has often caused consternation among scholars; however, the exploit of Shamgar against the Philistines parallels the exploits of David's top three mighty men: Adino the Eznite, who killed 800 men (no doubt Philistines) at one time; Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, who fought the Philistines until his hand froze to his sword; and Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite, who stood in a field of lentils and defended it from the Philistines and wrought a great victory (2 Sam 23:8–17). These were the type of men that David had in his ranks, who could defend Israel against their enemies, especially the Philistines.

establishment of David's throne. At the same time, the harsh stories of Benjamin's atrocities in chapters 19–21 presented a strong message concerning their inadequacy in spiritual, social, and national leadership matters.

41. Wong, "Ehud and Joab," 399–412, concludes that Ehud's deception of Eglon is disturbing in light of later parallels with Joab's acts of deception when assassinating Abner and Amasa (cf. 2 Sam 3:27; 20:8–10). However, there are no negative assessments of Ehud's deception within Judg 3. On the contrary, one could just as easily argue that the same deceptive traits in David had a more disturbing outcome than Joab's assassination of Abner and Amasa (cf. 1 Sam 21:12–15; 27:8–12; 28:2). As with Ehud in the book of Judges, the author of 1 Samuel does not critique David's deception either.

42. The authors of both accounts go out of their way to note the physical size of the opponent. Eglon was a "very fat" (בריא מאד Judg 3:17) man, and Goliath was a tall man with massive armor (1 Sam 17:4–7). I have argued elsewhere that both of these accounts were written by the same person, Abiathar (see Peterson, *Authors*).

It appears that the author began his character parallels by relating short narrative events that could easily be connected to the contemporary leadership of his day and then moved into more complex character parallels. At the same time, as a piece of propaganda directed at the northern tribes, stories related to the judges from these tribes should not be surprising either, even an account about the tribe of Benjamin from which Ehud (and Saul) hails. Indeed, David desired a unified nation that included Benjamin as well.[43]

Deborah and Barak: Judg 4–5

Next, the account of Deborah and Barak's defeat of Jabin presents the exploits of several of the northern tribes.[44] As with the Ehud account, this story allowed the author to bring honor to the northern tribes, while pointing out that it had been the prophetess Deborah, and not the timid Barak, who had led the nation to victory. As part of a patriarchal culture where shame and honor prevails,[45] Deborah (and Jael) gains victory and honor (Judg 4:9). David stands out as resembling those qualities seen in Deborah. Both were God-fearing and great military leaders. What is more, David, as a boy, had excelled in a patriarchal setting geared to adult males and had gained victory and honor (1 Sam 17:50–54; cf. 18:7–8, 30). On the other hand, Saul (who

43. Brettler, *Book of Judges*, 112, correctly notes that the inclusion of a Benjamite here has nothing to do with a recollection of Saul per se, but rather calls to remembrance the close geographical proximity of the two tribes. It is my contention that this is a part of the conciliatory aspect of Judges as a whole.

44. The recollection of the exploits of Issachar, Reuben, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh in the Song of Deborah promotes unity and evokes memories of military greatness. Although Manasseh is not mentioned by eponym, the name Machir (5:14) is an early designation of the tribe. See Engelhard, "Machir," 210. Also, Cundall, "Judges," 179, correctly points out that Judah and Simeon's absence appears to be due in part to the separation of these tribes both geographically and politically during the period of the Judges. Indeed, the central regions of Israel were occupied by stronger neighbors as evidenced by the Canaanite control of Gezer (1:29) and the Philistine control of the valley regions (1:19) to the west and north of Judah (e.g., Beth-shean; cf. Judg 1:27; 1 Sam 31:10–12).

45. See Esler, *Sex, Wives, and Warriors*, 180–215, 270–72.

parallels Barak) had relied on David to bring about victory for Israel both in the event of Goliath, and later, as a leader in Saul's army (see 1 Sam 18:5). While Barak had allowed the glory to go to Deborah (and Jael) without becoming envious, Saul became jealous and sought to kill David (1 Sam 18:7–8).

In the same account, the choice to include material mentioning Heber and his wife Jael, who were Kenites, is a calculated move by the author to gain the support of powerful families friendly to Israel,[46] yet not necessarily a part of the nation.[47] David had already begun forging strong alliances with several powerful families, including the Kenites, when he gave portions of the Amalekite spoils to these southern groups (1 Sam 30:26–31).

Next, the author's choice to include the Song of Deborah was a masterful stroke of political and literary genius. The Song of Deborah was no doubt known by many long before the actual recording of it here in Judges. It tells of a better day in the history of the fledgling nation when unitedly they had defeated the Canaanites, the long-time enemies of Israel. Similarly, during the late eleventh century, the constant threat of Philistine invasion required a unified defense and a strong central leader. Even with these strong parallel motifs it was the literary aspect of the passage (viz., the genre) that spoke the loudest. The author's inclusion of the song subtly evoked admiration for David who had had similar songs written about his great victories of the past (1 Sam 18:7).[48] Furthermore, David was a great

46. This assumption is supported by the mention of the peace treaty between Jabin and Heber in 4:17. The need for such a treaty suggests that Heber was the leader of a powerful family that had not only political power with the people, but no doubt military abilities as well. See also Saul's positive treatment of them in 1 Sam 15:6.

47. The repeated mention of the Kenites' relationship to Moses (1:16; 4:11) gives validity to their importance in the story. Moreover, the fact that the author mentions that Heber moved from the south (4:11) to the heart of the northern tribes of Israel further bolsters the possibility that the author desired to create alliances both inside and outside of the tribes themselves in support of David's bid for the throne.

48. שׁאול באלפיו ודוד ברבבתיו ("Saul [has killed] his thousands and David his ten thousands").

poet and songwriter at this time as well. David served as a singer and musician in the court of Saul (1 Sam 16:18–23) and had written several psalms/songs long before his rise to the throne.[49] Indeed, David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (i.e., *The Song of the Bow*) was taught to the men of Judah and was written in the book of Jashar (2 Sam 1:18–27). These would have been known by many, but even if they were not, David's reputation for great victories, as sung by the women (1 Sam 18:7), would have been. This is clearly evidenced by the popularity of the women's victory songs for David even among the Philistines (1 Sam 21:11; 29:5).

Gideon and Abimelech

The accounts of Gideon and his son Abimelech in chapters 6–9 form the heart of the Judges narrative.[50] Scholars have pondered the date and reason for the inclusion of the Abimelech story because it lacks the cyclical structure so prevalent in 3:7–16:31. However, when read from the polemical perspective, the motive for its inclusion is clear. The account of Gideon's success in battle and his refusal of kingship followed by the usurping of the position by Abimelech parallel the life of Saul and Ishbosheth.[51] The chart below will demarcate several parallels, which validate

49. The many psalms recorded by David when he ran from Saul (e.g., Pss 18, 52, 54, 59) and when he was in the wilderness (e.g., Pss 34, 56, 63) are a testimony to his prolific writing abilities before he gained the throne. There can be little doubt that his performances for Saul and later in life were well known by many (2 Sam 1:17–27).

50. Globe, "Enemies Round About," 246, presents a chart that points out that Gideon's story is the central focus of the author. While much of his chart is unconvincing, he does correctly note that Gideon's story is the point in the book where the downward spiral of the individual judges begins. The judges are predominantly good until Gideon's failure with the ephod—this is exactly what is suggested by my first chart.

51. It is interesting that in the midst of the story of Saul, immediately after his first great victory over the Ammonites, Samuel recounts a brief history of the judges' period (1 Sam 12:9–11). This included not only the events of Judg 4–5 with Deborah and Barak, but also the periods of Gideon (Judg 6–8) and Jephthah (Judg 11–12).

this conclusion. We will begin with a comparison of Gideon and Saul.[52]

Gideon	Saul
(1) The account of Gideon starts with an introduction of his father Joash (Judg 6:11) and is followed by a story about Gideon and his father concerning the altar of Baal (Judg 6:25–32)	(1) The account of Saul starts with an introduction of his father Kish (1 Sam 9:1) and is followed by a story about Saul and his father concerning lost donkeys (1 Sam 9:3–21)
(2) God chooses Gideon to lead his people from the hand of the Midianites (Judg 6:11–14)	(2) God chooses Saul to lead his people from the hand of the Philistines (1 Sam 9:16)
(3) Gideon protests his appointment by noting he is the "least" (צער) in his family and from the smallest clan in Manasseh (Judg 6:15)[53]	(3) Saul protests his appointment by noting he is the "least" (צער) among the clans in Benjamin (1 Sam 9:21)
(4) Gideon receives three signs from God to prove that he is truly called (Judg 6:17–24; 36–40)	(4) Saul receives three signs from God to prove that he is truly called (1 Sam 10:2–7)
(5) Gideon is directed by God in the altar of Baal event (Judg 6:25)	(5) Saul is directed by God through the prophet Samuel in the lost donkeys event (1 Sam 9:20)
(6) Gideon's name is changed to "Jerubbaal" (Judg 6:32)	(6) Saul has a new designation as being "among the prophets?"[54] (1 Sam 10:12)
(7) The Spirit (רוח) of the Lord comes upon Gideon to lead the	(7) The Spirit (רוח) of the Lord comes upon Saul to lead the

52. Variations of the following charts appear in Peterson, *Authors*, 303–8.

53. For a discussion on the differences of Saul and Gideon's call and the nuances of their responses, see Birch, "Development of the Tradition," 61–64.

54. For a discussion on this *mashal*, see Sturdy, "Original Meaning," 206–13. For a defense of the position for the late interpolation of the phrase, see Eppstein, "Was Saul also among the Prophets?" 287–303.

people in battle (Judg 6:34)	people in battle (1 Sam 10:10; 11:6)
(8) Gideon's forces are reduced at the command of God, some because of fear (cf. Judg 7:3–4)	(8) Saul's forces are reduced through fear at the sight of the enemy (1 Sam 13:6)[55]
(9) Gideon ends up with 300 men with which he won the battle (Judg 7:8)	(9) Saul ends up with 600 men, but the battle is postponed out of fear (1 Sam 13:6–7)[56]
(10) Gideon's battle plan included dividing the people into "three companies" (שְׁלֹשָׁה רָאשִׁים; cf. Judg 7:16)	(10) Saul's battle plan included dividing the people into "three companies" (שְׁלֹשָׁה רָאשִׁים; cf. 1 Sam 11:11)
(11) Against all odds, Gideon routed the enemy with torches and trumpets not with swords and spears (Judg 7:8–23)	(11) Against all odds, Jonathan (not Saul), routed the enemy (see 1 Sam 14:1–14); Saul's men did not have "swords" or "spears" (חרב/חנית; cf. 13:22)
(12) Gideon's leadership and ability to conquer the Midianites is questioned by the men of Succoth (Judg 8:6), and after the victory he punishes them (Judg 8:16)	(12) Saul's leadership and ability to conquer the Ammonites is questioned by "evil men" (1 Sam 10:27), but Saul refuses to punish them after the victory (1 Sam 11:13)
(13) After the victory Gideon rejects kingship and tells the people to look to YHWH for leadership (Judg 8:22–23)—a proper response	(13) After Saul's early victories, he accepts kingship despite Samuel's reminder of YHWH's leadership in the past and his anger against them for asking for a king (1 Sam 12)—an improper response
14) Gideon's spiritual lapse is directly related to the spoils of war (Judg 8:24–27)	14) Saul's second spiritual lapse is directly related to the spoils of war, which he was supposed to devote to YHWH (1 Sam 15)

55. Dragga, "In the Shadow of the Judges," 40.

56. Ibid., 41. Dragga posits that Saul was twice as blessed militarily as Gideon but only half as obedient.

15) After Gideon's proper choice of allowing YHWH to be king, the story ends with peace for 40 years (Judg 8:28)	15) After the people's improper choice for a king, hardship follows. This account ends the way Gideon's had begun. The people are hiding in caves, pits, cliffs, etc. from their enemies (see 1 Sam 13:6; Judg 6:2)

From this chart we can determine that the author of Judges purposely chose Gideon's story as the turning point of Judges with a clear motive of paralleling it with the account of Saul's rise and downfall as found in 1 Sam 9–15. However, not every part of Saul's early reign is negatively critiqued. In this regard, it is unlikely that the author of Judges, if he is contemporary with David, sought to discredit Saul's reign completely, especially based upon David's treatment of Saul and his lament for him and his sons after their death (2 Sam 1).[57] Indeed, David acknowledged Saul as God's anointed more than once (1 Sam 24; 26:9–10; 2 Sam 1:14) and allowed God to remove Saul from power, even though David could have killed Saul on two separate occasions (1 Sam 24; 26); however, this was not the case with Ishbosheth. David's battles to secure the kingdom from Ishbosheth prove that David did not see him as a legitimate heir to the throne. This may have been due in part to Jonathan's abdication of the throne to David (1 Sam 23:17; 20:12–17) and Saul's acknowledgment that David would be king (1 Sam 24:20), even though Saul sought to preserve a dynasty of his own through Jonathan (1 Sam 20:31). Nevertheless, while Judg 6–8 generally presents Gideon in a positive light, as was Saul's early rule as noted in 1 Sam 9–12, it is the events concerning Abimelech in chapter 9 that serve to discredit both Saul and Ishbosheth by literarily merging Saul's later rule and Ishbosheth's short reign. Again, a chart can best show the parallels.

57. Although he dates the editing of the stories in Judges late, Brettler, *Creation of History*, 104, rightly points out that the refusal of David to usurp the throne of Saul proved that he was a better choice for king.

Abimelech	Saul and Ishbosheth
(1) Abimelech secured the throne with the aid of relatives—the Shechemites (Judg 9:1–3)	(1) Ishbosheth secured the throne with the aid of relatives—Abner (2 Sam 2:8–9)
(2) Abimelech kills his seventy innocent brothers with one escaping—Jotham (Judg 9:5); Abimelech has the help of "reckless fellows" (Judg 9:4)	(2) Saul kills eighty-five innocent priests with one escaping—Abiathar. Saul has the help of Doeg the Edomite (1 Sam 22:18–20)
(3) Abimelech's kingship is denounced by Jotham (Judg 9:7–20), and God fulfills the prophecy against Abimelech (Judg 9:56–57)	(3) Saul's kingship is denounced by Samuel (1 Sam 13:14; 15:23; 28:17), and God fulfills the prophecy against Saul (1 Sam 31; 2 Sam 4)
(4) An oracle is given concerning the negative outcome of Abimelech and the people of Shechem (Judg 9:20)	(4) An oracle is given concerning the negative outcome of Saul and his sons (1 Sam 28)
(5) God sends an "evil spirit" (רוח רעה) to drive a wedge between Abimelech and the Shechemites (Judg 9:23)	(5) God sends an "evil spirit" (רוח רעה) to trouble Saul (1 Sam 16:14)
(6) Abimelech wages war with his own people (Judg 9:34–57)	(6) Ishbosheth wages war with his own people (2 Sam 2:12–32) as did Saul (1 Sam 22:18–19)
(7) After he is wounded in battle, Abimelech asks his "armor bearer" (נשׂא כליו) to "draw your sword" (שׁלף חרבך) and kill me (Judg 9:54)	(7) After he is wounded in battle, Saul asks his "armor bearer" (נשׂא כליו) to "draw your sword" (שׁלף חרבך) and kill me (1 Sam 31:4)[58]
(8) Abimelech's reign is short (Judg 9:22)	(8) Ishbosheth's reign is short (2 Sam 2:10)

58. So too Cundall and Morris, *Judges & Ruth*, 136; and Schneider, *Judges*, 148.

As touched on above, scholars have long noted that the account of Abimelech serves as a break with the cyclical pattern of the judges.[59] This turning point also allows one to recognize the *Sitz im Leben*[60] for the writing of the book. At the heart of this apologia for David, the author draws attention to a period in Israel's history, when a God-ordained leader (i.e., Gideon/Saul) had been replaced by a son (i.e., Abimelech/Ishbosheth) who is not sanctioned by God. Indeed, while both Saul and Gideon were appointed by God to lead Israel for a period of time, their offspring did not have that same mandate. Furthermore, both Abimelech and Ishbosheth did not deliver Israel from any foreign threat but rather created havoc within their own nation![61] After Saul's twofold sin (1 Sam 13:13–14; 1 Sam 15:28), his mandate to lead Israel was forfeited to David.[62] Saul, in essence, became much like Abimelech by trying to keep the throne by force of arms as had Ishbosheth. It is for this reason that the characteristics of Abimelech, Saul, and Ishbosheth begin to blur. The death scenes of Saul and Abimelech also strengthen this conclusion. The fact that Ishbosheth's death is not paralleled in any way is due in large part to the date of the composition of the book.[63] If Judges is an apologia written during the civil war between David and Ishbosheth, then at the time of the writing of the "first edition" of Judges, Ishbosheth had not yet been assassinated (2 Sam 4:1–12). Thus, it is only during the immediate period following the death of Saul that the Gideon/Abimelech and Saul/Ishbosheth parallels fit (i.e., 2 Sam

59. See, for example, Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 445.

60. O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 306, opts for the phrase *Sitz im Text* (i.e., where it best fits in the "so-called Deuteronomistic History").

61. Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 446.

62. According to 1 Sam 13:13–14, Saul's role as king is over at this point even though several years has elapsed before David comes to the throne.

63. Cundall, *Judges*, 27, has posited a date of 980 BCE for the "first draft" containing the majority of 2:6—21:25. My suggestion moves this date back only 20–25 years. O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 307, has also come to the conclusion that the "ostensible" period of writing for the book of Judges should be seen as fitting best in the period between Saul's death and David's rise to the kingship over all Israel (i.e., 2 Sam 1–4).

1:1—5:1).[64] It is for this reason that from this point onward the negative aspects of the remaining judges (i.e., Jephthah and Samson) take on eerily similar characteristics to those of Saul in order to drive home the message focused on in Judg 6–9. Of course, as will be shown, it is the final chapters of Judges that bring this anti-Saulide sentiment to a crescendo.

Finally, although some argue that chapter 9 pushes against kingship,[65] and thus undermines any proposed apologia for a monarchy, this is not an accurate assessment.[66] What the author of Judges is in fact doing with the Abimelech narrative is to show what *kind* of kingship is to be avoided.[67] Indeed, self-appointed kingship will end in devastation![68] What is more, I have argued elsewhere that Jotham's experience of being the sole survivor of a family "genocide" at the hands of Abimelech portends the experience of Abiathar, a possible candidate for the authorship of Judges.[69] In this vein, Abiathar may have used

64. 2 Sam 3:1 indicates that this was not a short war but that it went on for an extended period of time and was very exacting on the supporters of Saul.

65. See, for example, Gressmann, *Die Anfänge Israels*, 219–20; Richter, *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Richterbuch*, 285–86; Buber, *Kingship of God*, 75, posits, albeit incorrectly, that the entire book is anti-monarchical, not just chapter 9; Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum*, 32–42 (on the redaction of Jotham's fable, see esp. 39); Bright, *History of Israel*, 182, 273 n. 7; Soggin, *Judges*, 173–94, esp. 176–77; Niditch, *Judges*, 114–18. Many of these sources are noted by Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 447–48 n. 19.

66. For a perspective showing how Jotham's fable promotes proper or a particular monarchy/leadership, see Maly, "Jotham Fable," 299–305; Oeste, *Legitimacy*, 84–87, 221–27; Oeste, "Butchered Brothers," 295–316; and Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 448. See competing perspectives as presented by Steinberg, "Social Scientific Criticism," 45–64, esp. 53–63.

67. See also Boda, *Judges*, 1079.

68. So too Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 453. Contra Bluedorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism*, 183, 210–12, who proposes that the Abimelech narrative is an anti-Baalism narrative. As Irwin ("Not Just Any King," 446) notes, Baal is nowhere directly mentioned here.

69. See Peterson, "Abiathar, the Priest," 451–52. Irwin, "Not Just Any King," 446–54, rejects the character parallels between Saul and Abimelech as being too "general to be convincing" (446) and suggests that the Abimelech narrative serves as a polemic against the northern kingship of Jeroboam I's

Jotham's warning to those of Shechem as a means of highlighting the purpose of the greater apologia of the entire book of Judges itself, namely, Abiathar's warning to the northern tribes about Ishbosheth.

Jephthah

Evidence that the author may have used a source for his listing of the judges appears at the beginning of chapter 10 and the end of chapter 12. In both places, lists of minor judges are given: Tola and Jair (chapter 10); and Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (chapter 12). Apparently, little is said about these particular judges, so the author could move forward to the accounts of Jephthah and Samson, individuals who make for better parallels with David and Saul. Of course, as noted above, the inclusion of particular judges predominantly from the northern tribes would have served in a conciliatory manner, helping to bridge the political rift that developed during the civil war of Ishbosheth.

Another interesting parallel can be found between Judg 10 and 2 Sam 8. In 2 Sam 8, we find a list of nations that David immediately subdued after he secured the throne of Israel: Aram, Zobah (i.e., the region of Sidon and Aram), Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom,[70] and the Philistines. It seems more than coincidental that Judg 10 (see especially vv. 6–7), which follows immediately after the death of Gideon and Abimelech, is almost entirely devoted to these particular enemies of Israel and the

period and beyond, which was added during the early post-exilic period. While Irwin's textual analysis is compelling—perhaps pointing to a later secondary rhetorical use (cf. Abijah's speech in 2 Chr 13:4–12 and the problems facing Nehemiah in Neh 6:5–7)—he has, nonetheless, failed to see the closer parallels between Abimelech and Ishbosheth, and Jotham and Abiathar, both of which would move the date of the narrative into the period of David. On the possible later secondary use of Judges, see Boda, *Judges*, 1050–51.

70. For some reason, the book of Judges does not include Edom as an oppressor of Israel at this time. While they are mentioned in Deborah's Song (5:4) and Jephthah's recitation of history to the king of Ammon (11:17, 18), they are absent as a nation. However, the inclusion of the Maonites (10:12—some manuscripts have Midian instead of Maon), a people who are believed to have lived in the region of Seir/Edom, may have been the author's way of noting the threat to the southeast as well. See Young, "Meunim," 342–43.

influence of their gods on the people. The threat of these nations must have been mounting during the period of the civil war between Ishbosheth and David. Furthermore, as the cycle ends in Judges, the external threats of Ammon to the east (Jephthah's enemy; Judg 11–12) and the Philistines to the west (Samson's enemy; Judg 13–16) parallel two of the enemies of Israel in the days of David—the first to be subdued by David under the united monarchy (2 Sam 5; 8:12; 10:1–19).

Next, the reason for the inclusion of Jephthah's story in the book of Judges becomes clear when his character traits are compared to that of Saul.[71]

Jephthah	**Saul and Ishbosheth**
(1) The elders of Gilead choose Jephthah for a selfish and immediate need for protection (Judg 11:4–8)	(1) The elders of Israel choose Saul for a selfish and immediate need for protection (1 Sam 8:20)
(2) Deliverance of the Gileadites from an Ammonite attack inaugurated Jephthah's leadership (Judg 11)	(2) Deliverance of Jabesh-Gilead from an Ammonite attack inaugurated Saul's kingship (1 Sam 11)
(3) The people make Jephthah their leader in a formal setting before the Lord at Mizpah before the battle is won (Judg 11:11)	(3) The people make Saul their leader in a formal setting before the Lord at Mizpah before the battle is won (1 Sam 10:17)
(4) The "Spirit of the Lord" (רוח יהוה) comes upon Jephthah for the battle at hand (Judg 11:29)	(4) The "Spirit of God" (רוח אלהים) comes upon Saul for the battle at hand (1 Sam 11:6)
(5) Jephthah makes a foolish "vow" (נדר) that affects his only child, his daughter (Judg 11:31)	(5) Saul makes a foolish "oath" (אלה) that affects his oldest child, Jonathan (1 Sam 14:24)[72]
(6) Jephthah is remorseful for the	(6) Saul is not remorseful for the

71. Interestingly, in the same way, Jephthah was made an outcast by his people by living in Tob (Judg 11:3), and David also became an outcast because of Saul's attempts on his life. David was driven to Gath (1 Sam 21:10; 27; 29).

72. For further discussion on this parallel, see Schneider, *Judges*, 182–83.

vow (Judg 11:35)	oath (1 Sam 14:44)
(7) Jephthah's daughter is willing to allow the vow to be fulfilled (Judg 11:37)	(7) Jonathan is willing to allow the oath to be fulfilled (1 Sam 14:43)
(8) Jephthah fought his own people—Ephraim—in a senseless battle (12:1–6)	(8) Saul and Ishbosheth both fought their own people in senseless battles for the throne. Saul killed the priests of Nob (see 1 Sam 22), hunted David and his men (1 Sam 23–30), and Ishbosheth fought Judah (2 Sam 2–4)

In recounting the troubling story of Jephthah, the author presents a majority of negative aspects about him in order to evoke parallels with Saul. One particularly negative trait desires to be heard louder than any other, namely, Jephthah's rashness reflected in the utterance of the vow to sacrifice whatever met him upon his return from battle (Judg 11:31). This character flaw resounds in the life of Saul. Saul's rash oath almost cost the life of his oldest son Jonathan (1 Sam 14:39–45); Saul's impetuousness drove him in his oft-attempted assassination of David (e.g., 1 Sam 18:11; 19:10); Saul's uncontrollable rage triggered his attempted murder of even his own son—Jonathan (1 Sam 20:33); and Saul's rash paranoia cost the lives of eighty-five innocent priests (1 Sam 22).

Beyond this, the concluding chapter of Jephthah's story ends with a civil war between Jephthah and Ephraim, a bloody battle that had no positive outcome other than the victory of Jephthah. It seems that the inclusion of the random battle in Judg 12:1–6, which arose from the battle with the Ammonites, served as a gruesome reminder of the plight of inter-tribal warfare—a picture mirrored in the civil war with Benjamin in Judg 19–21, and a reality faced by the generation of David and Ishbosheth.

Samson

The Samson narrative, the longest of all the judges' stories, serves multiple functions as the closing to the cycle of judges.[73] The three main motifs of Judges—an apologia for Davidic kingship, anti-Saulide sentiment, and proper actions before God—are all wrapped up in the portrayal of the life of Samson. For example, the positive attributes of Samson reflect those found in David, whereas the negative characteristics point to Saul. Finally, the cultic indiscretions of Samson remind the reader that YHWH demands loyalty in worship and daily living. We begin with a chart depicting the parallels between Saul and Samson.

Samson	**Saul**
(1) Samson began the "deliverance" (הושׁיע) of Israel "from the hand of the Philistines" (פלשׁתים מיד; Judg 13:5), but his sin caused him to fall short (Judg 16:21)	(1) Saul began the "deliverance" (הושׁיע) of Israel "from the hand of the Philistines" (מיד פלשׁתים; 1 Sam 9:16), but his sin caused him to fall short (1 Sam 13; 15; 28; 31)
(2) Samson's life was marked by a lack of self-control and a constant downward spiral spiritually (Judg 16)	(2) Saul's life was marked by a lack of self-control and a constant downward spiral spiritually (1 Sam 13; 15; 28)
(3) The Philistines try to capture Samson in Gaza after the "doors" (דלתות)/gates are closed, but God helps him escape (Judg 16:1–3)	(3) Saul tries to capture David in Keilah, which had double "doors" (דלתים)/gates, but God helps him escape (1 Sam 23:7)
(4) YHWH departed from Samson (Judg 16:20)	(4) YHWH departed from Saul (1 Sam 18:12)

73. Some see Samson as a literary parallel to Heracles. On this, see Margalith, "Legend of Samson/Heracles," 63–70; Margalith, "More Samson Legends," 397–405; Margalith, "Samson's Foxes," 224–29; Margalith, "Samson's Riddle," 225–34; Turnquist, "Pillars of Hercules," 13–15; and "The Samson Saga and the Myth of Herakles," 305–28.

(5) Samson's last interaction with a woman (Delilah) led to his demise (Judg 16:4–21)	(5) Saul's last interaction with a woman (the witch of Endor) foretells his demise (1 Sam 28:7–19)
(6) Samson's weapon (i.e., his body) became a trophy before the god Dagon (Judg 16:23–24)	(6) Saul's weapons and body become a trophy before the goddess Ashtaroth (1 Sam 31:10)
(7) Samson kills himself in the presence of the Philistines (Judg 16:30)	(7) Saul kills himself in the presence of the Philistines (1 Sam 31:4)
(8) Samson's body is taken from the enemy and buried by his family (Judg 16:31)	(8) Saul's body is taken from the enemy and buried by his family (1 Sam 31:11–13)[74]

In the above chart, one key factor stands apart—that being, that all the negative aspects of Samson's life as they relate to Saul fall within Judg 16.[75] Many scholars have noted the possible redactional issues concerning the double closing of Samson's judgeship found in 15:20 and 16:31.[76] For example, the lack of the formula ותצלח עליו רוח יהוה ("the Spirit of the Lord came upon him"; cf. 14:6, 19; 15:14) in chapter 16 has been cited as evidence of this chapter being from a different source. Now, while chapter 16 may have been added for the purpose of the anti-Saulide polemic, another theory is possible. The author of this "first edition" may have removed the formula in order to make the parallels even closer to the reality of Saul's life. The fact that the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul rather early in his reign (1 Sam 16:14), even though he continued on as Israel's king, makes the parallel here in Judges even more

74. So too Cundall, *Judges*, 181; and Schneider, *Judges*, xv. The fact that Saul was a descendant of marriages between the warriors of Benjamin and the virgins of Jabesh-Gilead (Judg 21) may have been the reason for his quick action on their behalf and their act of kindness at Saul's death.

75. Interestingly, this same formula is used of Saul and David (cf. 1 Sam 10:10; 16:13).

76. See comments by Boda, *Judges*, 1226; and Brettler, *Book of Judges*, 42.

striking. What is more, aside from the cultic indiscretions[77] of Samson, in chapters 13–15, Samson appears as a true hero of the people in his acts of vengeance on Israel's enemy, the Philistines. Indeed, even his apparent indiscretion with the woman of Timnah is said to have been מיהוה ("from YHWH"). Samson used this one event to unleash judgment on the Philistines (Judg 14–15). Thus, the David/Samson parallels take on added importance as the chart below shows.

Samson	David
(1) The event of God's call of Samson centers around an interaction between a messenger of YHWH and Samson's father—Manoah (Judg 13:1–23)	(1) The event of God's call of David centers around an interaction between the prophet of YHWH (Samuel) and David's father—Jesse (1 Sam 16:1–13)
(2) Samson is called by God and set apart to be a leader of Israel before he is born (Judg 13)[78]	(2) David is called by God early in life to be the king of Israel (1 Sam 16:11–12)
(3) Samson kills a "lion" (ארי) with the help of the Lord (Judg 14:5–6)	(3) David kills a "lion" (ארי) and a bear with the help of the Lord (see 1 Sam 17:34–36)
(4) Samson had extensive interaction with the Philistines perhaps even living among them (Judg 14–16)	(4) David lived with the Philistines while he ran from Saul (1 Sam 27; 29)
(5) Samson uses his wit to trick the Philistines to get the best of them (Judg 14:11, 19)	(5) David uses his wit to trick the Philistines and get the best of them (1 Sam 21:13–15; 27:8–11)

77. There is some debate among scholars as to whether many of the so-called Nazirite stipulations (e.g., strong drink) applied to Samson directly or only to his mother. The only stipulation presented in the text is that no razor was to come upon his head (13:5).

78. Some suggest that 13:2–24 should be viewed as not original to the Samson cycle (e.g., Brettler, *Book of Judges*, 43). While this is possible, one cannot be certain. The author of the text may very well have been one of the first to compile much of this material from oral and written sources. Even without chapter 13, the majority of the Samson/David parallels fall within chapters 14–15, a clear literary unit.

(6) Samson spoils the Philistines without them knowing it (Judg 14:19)	(6) David spoils the Philistines without them knowing it (1 Sam 27:8–12)
(7) Samson's promised wife is given to another man by his father-in-law (Judg 14:20)	(7) David's promised wife, Merab, is given to another man by his father-in-law (1 Sam 18:19; cf. 17:25–27)
(8) Samson is offered the younger sister of his promised wife but refuses (15:3)	(8) David is offered the younger sister of his promised wife and accepts (1 Sam 18:27)
(9) The marriage event includes the death of many Philistines (Judg 14:19; 15:15)	(9) The marriage event includes the death of many Philistines (1 Sam 18:25)
(10) While hiding in a cave, three thousand men of Judah come to deliver Samson into the hands of his enemies (Judg 15:11–13)	(10) While hiding in a cave, three thousand men of Israel come to deliver David into the hand of his enemy Saul (1 Sam 24:2–3)
(11) Samson kills the Philistines with a jawbone which was laying on the ground (Judg 15:15)	(11) David kills Goliath with a stone which was laying on the ground (1 Sam 17:40)
(12) Even though the men of Judah feared the Philistines, Samson killed a thousand of them through the empowering of God (Judg 15:11–16)	(12) Even though David's men in Judah feared the Philistines, David led them up to Keilah to deliver it from the Philistines at the direction of God (1 Sam 23:1–5)

This final chart makes it clear that the author wanted his readers to associate the positive aspects of Samson with the life of David. The dual application of the life of Samson may have been the reason why the Samson narrative is the longest of all the accounts of the judges. Samson served as an excellent final character example to juxtapose the life of Saul with David prior to the explicit anti-Saulide portion of his rhetorical argument (i.e., chapters 19–21). Finally, one of the most troubling external military threats during the first few years of David's reign was the Philistines (2 Sam 5:17–25), the same enemy that had killed Saul (1 Sam 31). However, the lack of full support for David had

caused Israel to be vulnerable before their enemies. The message suggests that where Samson/Saul had ended in their fight with the Philistines, David would begin.

The "Appendix"

The author's pro-Davidic apologia and anti-Saulide polemic, which are implicit in the cycle, now come into sharp focus as the book reaches its apex in chapters 17–21. It is here that the author culminates the process of educating the reader concerning his central message promoting Davidic kingship. These five chapters also reflect the lawlessness and cultic chaos that were either present during the period of instability after the death of Saul or threatening to take over, especially in the North.[79] Furthermore, the civil war as depicted in chapters 19–21 makes it abundantly clear that this was not the answer to Israel's problems. The people had removed their focus from external threats to internal conflict. One option remained as a means for saving the people of Israel from total chaos, namely, a unified nation under Davidic kingship. Therefore, in the final five chapters, the author formulates his message not only by relying on emotive historical accounts removed from their chronological moorings, but also by employing blatant rhetorical phrases making explicit the need for a king.

The phrase בימים ההם אין מלך בישׂראל ("in those days there was no king in Israel")[80] appears in four places in the final five chapters (i.e., 17:6; 18:1 19:1; 21:25), twice with the accompanying phrase איש הישׁר בעיניו יעשׂה ("each man did what was right in his own eyes"; cf. 17:6; 21:25). This secondary phrase serves to connect the final "appendix" to the preceding cyclical section by bringing the depravity of the nation back to

79. Note that Ishbosheth ruled from Mahanaim in the Transjordan (2 Sam 2:8). This would have allowed for a level of lawlessness in the distant sections of northern Israel, a similar picture depicted in Judg 17–18.

80. Klein, *Triumph of Irony*, 141–42, posits that *melech* is to be seen more as "judge" rather than as monarch. Klein's assumptions seem unfounded in light of the clear polemics presented in the final chapters and the use of the term *melech* as "king" in the Gideon and Abimelech account. For a rebuttal of Klein's position, see O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 269 n. 3.

the foreground while highlighting the failure of the judges. At the same time the author has deliberately chosen certain accounts to highlight the issue of a nation devoid of leadership and a moral compass. Interestingly enough, all four accounts are set within the northern tribes of Israel, the very region that lacked Davidic kingship. Within the accounts of Micah and the Levite (chapter 17), the Danite migration (chapter 18), the Levite and his concubine (chapter 19), and the war with Benjamin (chapters 20–21) lie several subtle, yet clear messages pointing to the only obvious choice to fill the void of an absent unified kingship. These recorded events each hold a vital aspect to the rhetorical strategy of the author.

Judg 17–18

Chapters 17–18[81] are linked to the Samson cycle in a number of ways: for example, the 1100 pieces of silver of Delilah and Micah's mother (16:5; 17:2);[82] the mention of Eshtaol and Zorah (13:25; 16:31; 18:2, 8, 11); and the central role of the tribe of Dan. Here we can determine that the author intended these two sections to be understood as following each other, even though they are out of chronological order. His central focus is to show the spiritual depravity of the North by noting the idolatry of Micah and the Danites and the effects of that corruption even on the religious leadership. The author appears to be sending a twofold message both here and in the following two chapters.

81. Beecher, "Literary Form," 5, suggests that these two chapters could be removed with little injury done to the narrative due to difference in content and lack of chronological connections with the rest of the book. While it is possible that these chapters were added after the division of the kingdom to attack the cult center in Dan, this is somewhat problematic because Bethel is not presented in a negative sense (cf. Amos 7:10–17). Nevertheless, these chapters serve well to show social and religious chaos in the northern tribes.

82. The author may be trying to associate Israel's idolatry with the Philistines. In chapter 17, the mention of the 1100 pieces of silver links this chapter with chapter 16 and conjures recollection of the evil of Delilah's treachery against Samson (16:5). The author could possibly be trying to suggest that Micah was a child of Delilah.

First, idolatry is contagious and corrupts all who are touched by it. This fact can be seen in the corruption of Micah, the Levite (chapter 17), and the Danites (chapter 18). Second, the fact that the Levite was "of the family of Judah" (ממשפחת יהודה) seeking a place to live (17:7–8) bodes well as an argument for a more centralized form of worship and a desire to keep the Levites at a central location as opposed to wandering throughout Israel looking for work.[83] We know that the program of David was to organize worship and to establish a temple in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6–7; 1 Chr 13; 15)—a fact that must have been on his heart long before it came to fruition.[84] In this vein, the notation that there was "no king in those days" (17:6) right after Micah made the molten image and ephod betrays the need for a king to bring order to the religious establishment, something with which we know David is later credited (1 Chr 23–28).

Beyond the obvious problems of idolatry in chapter 18, the inclusion of the account of the injustice perpetrated by the Danites against Micah when they stole his priest and cultic paraphernalia also served a twofold purpose. First, a king would bring justice to the oppressed—a point further spotlighted by the opening notation of there being "no king in Israel" in 18:1. Second, even the remoteness of the Danites in the North would come under the rule of David—a factor made clear during Abner's negotiations for a unified kingdom during the civil war in 2 Sam 3:10.

Part 3: The Anti-Saulide Polemic of Judg 19–21

Although chapters 19–21 are part of the putative appendix, due to the explicit anti-Saulide and pro-Davidic rhetoric throughout, I will handle them separately. These final chapters relate the

83. See also Boda, *Judges*, 1058.

84. So too O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 272, who lists the following four key "Deuteronomic" features present in the rhetorical argument of Judges: the king had to be (1) a "holy warrior"; (2) an "executor of intertribal covenant loyalty"; (3) a "supreme patron of the cult"; and (4) an "arbiter of covenant (social) justice." David fulfilled all of these.

events leading up to the civil war between Israel and Benjamin and to the war itself. Because scholars such as Marc Zvi Brettler and Yairah Amit[85] have written at length about the anti-Saulide polemic within this section, only a few summary remarks will be given.

In Judg 19, the author chooses the deplorable actions of the Sodomites (Gen 19) in order to spotlight the depravity to which a nation can sink without the centrality of divinely appointed kingship.[86] The narrative also reflects specific anti-Saulide sentiments. First, the mention of geographical place names is a clue to their links with Saul.[87] The Levite is accosted while in the Benjamite town of Gibeah, Saul's home (see Judg 19:12–16; 1 Sam 15:34; cf. 1 Sam 11:4; 2 Sam 21:6; Isa 10:29). Also, Jabesh-Gilead is disparaged in the account, a city that played a key role in establishing Saul on the throne (cf. Judg 21:8–12; 1 Sam 11), which had also rejected David's overtures for friendship early in his bid for a united monarchy (2 Sam 2:2–7).[88] Second, when provoked by the injustice of the men of Gibeah, the Levite hews his concubine into twelve pieces (Judg 19:29). When Saul is provoked by the injustice of the Ammonites, he hews his oxen into pieces (1 Sam 11:1–7).[89]

85. Brettler, "Book of Judges," 395–418; Brettler, *The Book of Judges*, 84–91; Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 178–88; and Amit, *Book of Judges*, 341–50. As early as the middle of the nineteenth century, German scholars had noticed the connections between Saul and the final chapters of Judges. See Güdemann, "Tendenz und Abfassungszeit," 357–68; Auberlen, "Die drei Anhange des Buches der Richter," 336–568; and Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*. These sources are noted by Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 184.

86. Brettler, "Book of Judges," 416, concludes that the editor of Judges borrowed from Gen 19 as a means to smear the birthplace of Saul.

87. Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 181–83, has correctly noted the connection between the Levite and David's hometown, Bethlehem-Judah. However, I cannot agree with her connection of Jebus to David in this account, at least as it relates in a positive sense. In 19:12, Jebus was disparaged and would not have reflected positively on David. It would, however, have fit in the period *prior to* David's capture of it (2 Sam 5:1–9) as I suggest.

88. Brettler, "Book of Judges," 413.

89. Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 181–82, suggests several parallels. A couple is the common theme of donkeys (19:3, 10, 19, 21, 28; cf. 1 Sam 9:3, 5, 20,

What is more, Saul was a direct descendant of a woman from Jabesh-Gilead who became one of the wives of the remaining Benjamites (Judg 21:12–14). Beyond Saul's obvious link with Benjamin, we can also make connections with Ramah,[90] Rimmon,[91] and Mizpah.[92] These all reflect key geographical locations in the story of Saul. Thus, we may conclude with Brettler that this account serves to " . . . make Saul look bad. He comes from a tribe, indeed from a city of rapists and murderers, who are unwilling to own up to their own wrongdoings."[93]

Finally, a couple of other key issues stand out in the author's apologia for kingship. First, in the period of the Judges, the depravity of Benjamin and their failure to adhere to the dictates of the majority of Israel brought about mass destruction and death. This finds a fitting parallel in the wars that ensued between David's men and the northern tribes. In this case, the devastation of the civil war was once again initiated by the tribe of Benjamin under the leadership of Ishbosheth and his general Abner. For example, in 2 Sam 2:24–28, an account which parallels the carnage of Judg 20, a record is given of one of the battles between David's and Ishbosheth's men and the death that ensued on both sides. While the number of battle deaths is small in comparison with Judg 20, 2 Sam 3:1 makes it clear that the war was long and taxing on both sides. The message is clear: civil war only hurts the nation's unity and can threaten the annihilation of entire tribes. Moreover, as noted in Part 1 above, the tribe of Judah is once again placed in the spotlight as the God-sanctioned leader (Judg 20:18). From a religious

etc.) and the consulting of a servant (19:11; cf. 1 Sam 9:6–8). Some suggest that we should understand the actions of the Levite in a negative sense as well. See Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 133.

90. According to Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 180, Ramah, the hometown of Samuel, appears to have little literary value in chapter 19 other than to bring out another aspect of the polemic against Saul.

91. Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 181. Amit points out that Rimmon is also the place where Saul had rested with 600 men (1 Sam 14:2).

92. Mizpah, the place where Samuel anointed Saul (1 Sam 10:17–27), is used in chapter 20 as the staging ground for the attack on Benjamin.

93. Brettler, *Book of Judges*, 89.

perspective, the depravity of the nation goes beyond the sin of Benjamin and implicates the Levites and even the line of Moses with idolatry (Judg 18:30).

Part 4: The Chronological Links with the Time of David

Aside from the notations in 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25, which imply a date in the time of the monarchy,[94] four texts help situate the pro-Davidic apologia/anti-Saulide polemic within the days of David.[95] These texts include 1:21b, 29; 18:30, 31; and 21:19. Although I have handled this discussion elsewhere, I will summarize the key issues related to my current argument.[96] The first text, 1:21b, states that "the Jebusites dwell with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day." Two things are of importance here: first, at the time of the writing of Judg 1, Jerusalem still belonged to Benjamin. It was not until David conquered the stronghold (מצדה) of the Jebusites that Jerusalem was subdued and brought into the region of Judah (2 Sam 5:6–9). This event happened *after* the civil war with Ishbosheth! Second, some argue that Jebusites lived in Jerusalem even after David conquered the city (2 Sam 24:16, 18); however, the notation that the Jebusites were living with *Benjamin*—not *Judah*—makes this argument untenable. What is more, the mentioning of Araunah the Jebusite in 2 Sam 24:16–24 does not mean that there was a large contingent of Jebusites in Jerusalem as 1:21 intimates.

The second text, 1:29, mentions the presence of Canaanites in Gezer. This could only be true if the text was written prior to Solomon's early reign when the pharaoh of Egypt captured Gezer and gave it to Solomon's wife as a wedding gift (1 Kgs 9:15–17; ca. 960s BCE). Again, this would allow the text to fall

94. Contra Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 59, 476; and Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, 212–23, who both argue that YHWH is the "king" being rejected. This conclusion flies in the face of the dominant apologia for Davidic kingship.

95. For a more detailed handling of these issues, see O'Connell, *Rhetoric*, 332–38.

96. See Peterson, "Abiathar, the Priest," 438–42.

within the period of the civil war of 2 Sam 2–4 without historical difficulties.

The third text, found in 18:30, is often heralded as the decisive text for dating the book after 722 BCE.[97] Because v. 30 mentions that Dan had idols within their midst עד־יום גלות הארץ ("until the captivity of the land"), most assume that this refers to a date after the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom (see 2 Kgs 15:29). However, v. 31 qualifies this notation in v. 30 by recording that this idolatrous activity took place while the house of God was in Shiloh. Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines in the eleventh century. Again, this would place the writing of Judges sometime soon *after* the destruction of Shiloh. The period of David is a logical fit. What is more, if there was an unsanctioned cult site at Dan from the judges' era until the Assyrian captivity, then one would also have to accept that Samuel, Saul, and David—all reformers—did nothing about it. Finally, why would Jeroboam I need to establish a cult site there if it already existed (1 Kgs 12:25)?

The final verse, 21:19, seems to imply that the text is being written in a time when Shiloh was now a distant memory. Specific instructions are given in this verse of how to locate Shiloh. Now, while any time after the destruction of Shiloh (ca. 1050 BCE) would fit this need, it seems appropriate that it would be closer to the actual time of its destruction when, apparently, women still went there to perform ritual dances (Judg 21:21). A period within fifty years of the destruction of Shiloh fits nicely. Again, this suits the period of the civil war between David and Ishbosheth, which dates roughly to 1000 BCE.

To summarize then, none of the chronological clues within the text of Judges preclude an early edition of Judges being written during the civil war noted in 2 Sam 2–4. Indeed, these texts seem to push the writing of the text to an earlier period, as opposed to a later date after 722 BCE.

97. For example, Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 66. Note also the argument for a scribal gloss by Budde, *Die Bücher Samuel erklärt*, 123–24; or Wolf, *Judges*, 378; and Young, *Introduction*, 170.

Conclusion

As noted in 2 Sam 3:1, the civil war between David and the northern tribes dragged on over an extended period of time, with David slowly gaining the upper hand. The desire for a unified nation would have been great, especially as the surrounding enemies of Israel gained strength while Israel and Judah depleted their valuable resources—both human and material—with a protracted civil war. The constant threat of attack from the Philistines would have been extremely troubling for David as the civil war raged on. There can be little doubt that the commissioning of an apologia/"first edition" of Israel's judges-era history, rife with character and historical parallels readily recognizable in the present situation, would have been important in gaining support for Davidic rule from the northern tribes. Unity would be the only way Israel would have been able to stand against her enemies. Therefore, a pro-Davidic apologia/anti-Saulide polemic of this sort, whether viewed as propaganda or "selective history," served the desired end: to promote David and bring an end to the civil war. Further, beyond the anti-Saulide rhetoric, the book of Judges made it clear that the political unity, which the nation so desperately needed, had to be focused on the supremacy and worship of YHWH. Interestingly, the obsession of the author with proper recognition of YHWH as God and the formulaic notations of Israel's idolatry with the gods of the other nations betray the cultic background of the author. Thus, the newly fashioned "history" reached out to people of all walks of life including those of cultic circles. Judges promoted proper worship, which could be directed by the one man who carried the stamp of approval from the God of Israel himself (1 Sam 16:13). It was David to whom the people could turn to and trust for social, political, and religious leadership.

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